

Statement of U.S. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA)
Ranking Democrat, House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet
Regarding NBC's Decision to Cease
Airing of Hard Liquor Advertisements
March 20, 2002

"I applaud NBC for its decision today to end its experiment with hard liquor advertisements. I vigorously opposed NBC's plan when it was originally unveiled last year and I believe today's announcement is a welcome news to America's youth and families.

Alcohol is a leading cause of many public health ailments for millions of Americans. Moreover, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has noted that alcohol is the Number 1 drug problem for America's young people and is a key factor in the three leading causes of death for youth: automobile crashes, homicide, and suicide.

Concern about these negative consequences of hard liquor alcohol consumption led me to oppose NBC's plan to end a decades-long voluntary ban on such ads by industry leaders. I continue to believe it is bad public policy to encourage youthful television viewers to consume hard liquor.

Television broadcasters are especially favored by the government in many areas of policy because they deliver to the American people free, universally-available television programming. Broadcasters received free airwave frequencies and they get free carriage on cable systems for their stations. The other side of the public policy coin is that television broadcasters discharge special obligations because of their valuable trusteeship of the public's airwaves.

I believe NBC's decision today is squarely in the public interest and again, I applaud them for reversing course.

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